

Johan Swemmer, Hennie Marais and Tony Cockbain  
Air Traffic Navigation Services  
Private Bag X1, Bonaero Park  
1622, South Africa

## **ESTABLISHING INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS (FROM AN AIR TRAFFIC SERVICES PERSPECTIVE)**

### **ABSTRACT**

Aviation continues to play an integral part in communication and development around the globe. The recent technological advances have unfortunately not been spread globally at an even tempo. Therefore the need for sufficient and competent staff around the world demands a need for efficient training organisations, providing quality training, through highly skilled and competent trainers. This need has placed most training organisations under extreme pressure to increase productivity and be ever more resourceful in the training process.

The benefits of training partnerships to the participating organisations, and their clients are of immeasurable value to all concerned. This avenue provides a new approach to solving some of the training problems of the aviation industry and providing high quality service to the clients.

This paper will explore the sharing of resources, information, knowledge and techniques on a worldwide scale, contributing towards the realisation of the dream of global safe skies through partnerships and alliances. The solutions offered have been developed by experience through trial and error in the process of establishing national, regional and international training partnerships.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Transport in general and specifically air transport has and will continue to play a key-supporting role in shrinking the globe and enhancing communication,

information flow and co-operation within the global village. The infrastructure and support required for the safe, orderly, expeditious and efficient conduct of flights can only be established through well-trained and competent personnel.

The economic and technological advances of the recent past have unfortunately not spread throughout the world at an even tempo. Some countries and organisations ride on the crest of the technological wave, while others still struggle with the implementation of older technology and systems.

This presentation will explore the scope of co-operation and certain avenues and proposed solutions whereby highly skilled, motivated and competent personnel can be delivered to serve the global infrastructure. The sharing of resources, information, knowledge and techniques on a worldwide scale will contribute to realise the dream of global safe skies.

Co-operation is the key to establish infrastructure and competent human resources capacity with the objective to ensure cost effective quality

### **SCOPE AND EXTENT OF CO-OPERATION.**

The extent to which organisations wish to co-operate will be dependent upon the need of the organisations concerned. We must remember that co-operation, in this industry, is a very complex issue.

Organisations may satisfy the specific need through ad hoc co-operation if a random need occurs. More specific and permanent needs may require a more structured and defined approach. Such needs will generate a requirement to establish partnerships alliances or co-operation agreements between organisations. Co-operation can be adequately addressed through a memorandum of understanding, which can be established within a relatively short time. Partnerships or alliances will require more time and effort to establish and may culminate in contracts between organisations and countries. Co-operation should, as prime objective, provide benefits and value to users while still being affordable to both users and partners involved.

#### IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS/ALLIANCES.

When potential partners or allies are identified and investigated, organisations should act with extreme caution to ensure that the best possible solutions for the end goal are obtained. The result of a successful partnership or alliance can be compared to a successful marriage, where the relationship is built on mutual trust and respect of the vision, mission, culture, philosophy and values of the parties concerned.

Partnerships or alliances should never be a one sided affair, with only one of the parties deriving benefit. The relationship should be focused at being mutually beneficial, to all concerned parties. The benefit should be measured in terms of quality of service, satisfying the training need, affordability of training and financial benefit derived by the partners. Real growth of Human Resources, can not be attained in isolation, especially in aviation.

Organisations entering into partnerships with the aim to “pirate” information and

skills will not be involved in long lasting and productive relationships. The organisations with a win-loose attitude will likewise only be involved in relatively unsuccessful short-term partnerships.

Training partnerships or alliances should ideally be established with reputable organisations. Such partnerships will serve to enhance the image and efforts of all concerned parties. Non-credible organisations with hidden agendas should not be tolerated in training partnerships or alliances. The impact of such organisations on students and eventually aviation safety may very well be catastrophic. With all organisations observing a code of ethics in terms of which parties they enter into partnerships with, the clandestine organisations will soon vanish from the scene, to the advantage of the truly committed training organisations and their clients.

The practice to align with reputable organisations will elevate the standard of all concerned. The co-operation between reputable organisations and the channeling of high quality efforts and practices will most certainly be to the benefit of the clients of such organisations and ultimately to the aviation industry. The training of Human Resources to the highest level of competence is the quickest way to ensure significant improvements in Air Traffic safety.

It is extremely important to evaluate the training philosophy of potential partners prior to commitment into an agreement. Compatible training philosophies and common objectives will form a sound base for co-operation and the development of a productive and long lasting partnership.

Niche markets may also determine potential partners. This partnership will revolve around the organisations

positioning themselves to cater for a specific need in the market. Yet again the parties stand to gain from a financial and skills vantage point. The primary beneficiary should however remain the client and the servicing of the training need and ultimately the individual. The client and the quality of service provided should remain paramount to all organisations, whether they are contemplating partnerships or not. When potential partners are evaluated, the impact of such an arrangement on the client should be given careful consideration. The spirit of the relationship between the primary contractor and the client should be reflected throughout the partnership and the service delivery. Aviation safety and client satisfaction are the prime concerns.

Most training facilities were established to satisfy the training needs of the parent organisation. The practice of training personnel from other organisations evolved later as a result of spare capacity, the increasing need for training institutions to become self sufficient and the worldwide demand for qualified personnel, especially air traffic controllers. The establishment of training partnerships or alliances should be aligned with the service provision irrespective of internal or external clients; i.e. the same attitude to service standard should be applied to clients from within an organisation and to clients from other service providers.

#### THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS/ALLIANCES.

We must bear in mind that aviation safety, in the first instance, depends on competent Human Resources. Modern day companies and service providers will most certainly not consider any partnerships or alliances if there are no benefits or advantages involved. Partners involved in sound training partnerships or

alliances stand to gain many benefits. The training budgets in many organisations are insufficient and are normally the first targets for cuts if budgetary figures require adjusting. Many managers of training facilities will confess that they require more trainers and training equipment and systems. These, in most industries are normally the drivers to scale down on training or cut personnel numbers, quite contradictory to the achievement of aviation safety.

Training partnerships will go a long way to alleviate the problem of human resources required to conduct the training successfully. The personnel employed by the partners can be utilised on various projects and at various venues to ensure maximum utilisation and adaptability. During periods of low intensity in the training schedule the trainers of one partner can assist the other partner if the second partner has a period of increased training activity. (instructor ex-change programmes)

Aviation training has become very specialised and certain organisations have developed expertise in specialised fields. Economic constraints and the vast differences in technology developed and used around the world have played a further role in establishing the differences in specialist areas. Training institutions may have lost the ability to provide training in lower technology areas as a result of the technological advances. Certain clients may require a specific need for training in low or high technology areas. The expertise developed or maintained by organisations in specific areas can be shared and made available to such clients through training partnerships.

The technology required to train delegates for high technology professions has become one of the major expenses in training worldwide. Simulators and part-

task trainers to develop the skills of personnel in aviation areas are essential yet extremely expensive, especially when the user requires customisation and deviates from off the shelf solutions. The high cost of technology requires the increase of operational hours of the equipment and systems to offset the expense. Training partnerships will allow partners to share technology and so improve the utilisation of specific systems installed at one site. The partners may purchase such systems together or individually, the benefit will however be derived from mutual use. This solution will be particularly feasible when the partners are located reasonably close to each other geographically. In many countries civilian and military training, although virtually identical, are conducted by different facilities on similar yet duplicate equipment and systems.

The ability developed by certain organisations in research and development can be accessed through training partnerships. As a result the wheel does not have to be reinvented at various venues around the world, it need only be adapted and fine-tuned for specific application.

It is again important to note that not only less advanced organisations will benefit from this interaction. Specific abilities and skills may lie dormant within smaller, less advanced organisations. Both advanced and less advanced organisations can thus benefit from these partnerships, by bringing specific treasures to the bargaining table.

A common and mostly misconstrued conception is that “We practice the same profession, but we are different”. The question is, does the need to be unique serve only to generate a comfort zone for the insecure. It is true that different interpretations and applications exist, the generics of tasks and training however

remain the same. In fact, the standards are not different, people are different and specific circumstances may necessitate different or adapted procedures and practices.

One of the main benefits derived from training partnerships must certainly be the standardisation of training packages and courseware. ICAO as the custodian of global standard practices in aviation supports this aspect. Trainers from different organisations will be able to provide standardised training packages at any suitable venue with no additional preparation and effort. The trainees and their sponsors will be assured of a uniform training standard and quality from all training providers. The specifics of different applications and interpretations can be trained as an additional option to the standard training package.

In addition to simplifying the presentation of training, standardised training packages will enhance the skills of trainees around the world. The operational deficiencies and unsafe practices in certain areas will also be alleviated. This will be a major step towards ensuring an elevated level of service around the world and as a result aviation safety and users around the world will benefit.

The positive impact of training partnerships or alliances on regional training efforts can not be over emphasised. The similarity of cultures and the understanding that exists between countries and organisations from a specific region will serve as a solid foundation for the development of training partnerships or alliances. The interaction between members representing a region and the various forums established at a regional level will further serve to simplify co-operation at a regional level. The relatively close geographical proximity of members of a region will enhance the

ability of delegates to train at venues relatively close to home in an environment that is not totally foreign to them. Training can also be presented off campus at the client's venue provided that high complexity simulations will not be required.

Training partnerships established in regions where mature relationships have developed can rely on the allocation of certain training responsibilities to specific partners eg. the responsibility for ab initio training can rest with one partner while the other can conduct the more advanced training or training in different specialist areas. This will again prevent the duplication of expensive training technology and ensure the maximum use of technology where this technology is available. The standardisation of regional training will result in an elevated and standardised service level within the region, with a positive impact on safety and efficiency within the region.

The interaction and additional exposure will enhance the experience and capabilities of trainers involved (improve level of education/people skills) in training partnerships. Exposure to various techniques and methodologies will stand the trainers of any organisation in good stead, new methods and approaches to training may even evolve from such experiences. The introduction to the other side of the fence will also foster a greater understanding of the operations and problems of other organisations and enhance co-operation in the training and operational fields. Training partnerships will eventually generate trainers of significant experience, capable of multi discipline training at various venues.

Outsourcing has become one of the many buzzwords of the present era. It has also become one of the areas where organisations are likely to make judgement errors, or outsource "the

things we do not like to do" or where "we are not making" money . Training partnerships will serve as ideal vehicles to conduct outsourcing in a controlled environment, with reasonable assurance of positive results. The relationships between training partners will allow the partners to perform the training in their specialist areas, to the benefit of the partnership as a whole.

Training partnerships will allow organisations to expand their training markets and ventures. The ability to train delegates depends largely on the availability of capable trainers and training aids as well as a venue. Training partners can provide these resource if the primary contractor experiences a problem. The client can therefore train at his preferred venue, with his preferred service provider. The standard of the training will be governed by the agreement between the partners and will still be managed by the primary contractor. The partner providing resources in this example will have the benefit of the exposure of the trainers. Such an arrangement will result in a "both gain" situation for all concerned.

Multiple financial benefits can be generated through training partnerships. The sharing of technology and resources will alleviate duplication and the associated expenses. The multi skilling of trainers will further reduce the requirement of having trainers capable of only performing very specific training tasks. The option of using trainers provided by partners will reduce the need to employ trainers and then only partially utilise these trainers.

#### SUGGESTIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS.

Any project or venture carries a certain amount of risk. The fears and risks

involved in training partnerships can be alleviated through the application of some basic principles.

As in all ventures and agreements the rules of the game must be established very clearly. This will involve discussions between the parties concerned to identify common objectives and goals. From these should flow the areas in which the organisations can successfully co-operate. Most importantly, there must be a willingness to co-operate. This will surely happen as long as the countries involved feel that they add value to their own countries objectives, contribute to safety and do not compromise any revenue or employment opportunities.

It will be in the interest of the partnership to document agreements and objectives, this will avoid any discrepancies at a later stage and will ensure a healthy relationship between the partners. The documentation can consist of a memorandum of understanding or even a contract if the partners prefer this.

Responsibilities for specific tasks should be assigned and accepted. Organisations may prefer to perform specific tasks or have expertise in specific areas, it will be sensible to channel such expertise to the benefit of the partnership and clients.

Regular communication regarding the activities of the partnership should be conducted. This will ensure that all parties know what is happening and that problems will be identified at an early stage and resolved amicably in the best interest of the partnership and the clients it serves.

The projects conducted by the partnership should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the applicability and effectiveness of such projects and

activities. Regular review will also ensure the standardisation of the training and the quality of training.

The finances involved in training partnerships will normally concern the people holding the purse strings. Partnerships need however not be costly. In fact, mutual trust and some creative thinking could alleviate a great deal of expenditure. Trainers and technology can be utilised within a partnership on a credit basis. Organisation A could use a trainer from organisation B for two weeks without any cost. Organisation A will however owe organisation B the use of one of its trainers for two weeks. With such an agreement in place, in place, the organisations will only have to pay for accommodation, airfares expenses and daily allowances.

### CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, it is our opinion that the benefits involved in such training co-operation agreements far outweigh the negatives, as has been shown. With the development of technology, the increase in air traffic movements and the “big earth” merely becoming a sizeable village, we believe that the training providers will in the near future, have no other option but to join resources, knowledge and skills. It is our philosophy to seek these mutually beneficial partnerships, not only for the companies/countries involved, but also for the aviation industry as a whole, and to implement them before it is too late. Under no circumstances must safety be allowed to be compromised which boils down to the fact that the process of influence and mentoring begins with the best and most comprehensive training. Anything that can be done to improve training in any way should be grabbed at and made to work for you.